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amnesty international news release

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AMNESTY ANTERNATIONAL RELEASES COMPUTER LIST OF DISAPPEARANCES IN ARGENTINA

I wonder where this list is.

Amnesty International today (Wednesday 20 June 1979) released a computer list of ~~2,665~~ 2742 cases of people known to have disappeared in Argentina since the military coup that brought General Jorge Rafael Videla to power in 1976.

Three weeks ago AI submitted the list to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States which will be sending a mission of inquiry to Argentina in August to investigate political imprisonment and disappearances in the country.

AI said it had details of disappearances in hundreds of additional cases. All the missing people are believed to have been abducted for political reasons, in many cases by government agents.

Human rights organizations in Argentina estimate that the total number of those who have disappeared for political reasons in the country may be as high as 15,000. The estimate is based on surveys they have conducted in 20 towns.

Two years ago the Supreme Court of Argentina received more than 20,000 writs of habeas corpus, including repeated applications by families who have failed to trace relatives although eye-witnesses have testified they were abducted by security forces.

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Amnesty International is a worldwide human rights movement which works impartially for the release of prisoners of conscience: men and women detained anywhere for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin, sex, religion or language, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence. Amnesty

In February this year the Supreme Court complained to the government that its own efforts to locate missing people had met with no cooperation from the country's police, army or security forces.

"We have received an unprecedented mass of detail in these cases. We needed the assistance of a computer to help our Research Department cross check the thousands of names, identity card numbers, nationalities and dates of reported abductions," said AI.

"Despite repeated assurances by the military authorities that they have contained the guerrilla threat in Argentina, a state of siege is still in force and more than 3,000 political prisoners are known to be in detention, most without charge or trial," said AI. "Relatives seeking information about missing members of their families who have been abducted are now facing increased harassment. The homes of some of them have been the target of bomb attacks and over the past two months relatives themselves have been abducted."

In addition to the Argentinian citizens who have disappeared the names on the AI computer list include nationals of 28 other countries who have also been abducted. Among the countries are Britain, Cuba, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Syria, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

The youngest of those listed by AI is a baby who was 20 days old at the time that he was abducted with his mother in July 1976. The mother has since reappeared but she has lost all trace of her child.

The oldest of those known to have disappeared is an 81-year-old grandfather who is reported to have been abducted in March 1978.

AI said it hoped that the mass of detailed information it had now provided to the Organization of American States would enable the forthcoming mission of inquiry to obtain precise information from the Argentine

government about the whereabouts of those who have disappeared.

"The families themselves have been stonewalled," said AI. "The authority of the Organization of American States may help to break the official silence."

Note for translators: "stonewalled" - American colloquial term meaning "deliberately ignored and frustrated".